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ABSTRACT

One of a series of seven modules developed to improve the knowledge and skills of vocational educators who are or who will be serving the handicapped in regular vocational education settings, this module, dealing primarily with the educable mentally retarded (EMR), is designed to (1) explain what mental retardation is and to explore the range of vocational capabilities of the mentally retarded student, (2) present the vocational educator with guidelines for establishing and carrying out a plan of individualized instruction for the retarded student, and (3) provide listings of resource agencies and further readings to assist the vocational educator who is working with the mentally retarded. Important points in setting up an individualized instructional program for mentally handicapped students are considered and suggestions are made for modifying existing programs to overcome problems. Two final sections cover (1) bibliographic sources and resource agencies and persons to contact for assistance, and (2) a set of problems/questions designed to enable the vocational educator to check his or her understanding of the ideas presented in the module, and to apply the principles discussed to his or her own teaching situation. (Author/HD)

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MAINSTREAMING THE HANDICAPPED IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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Serving the Mentally Retarded

CE 011 774

PREPARED BY

Behavioral Science and Technology Group

American Institutes for Research
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The Consortium of the California State University and Colleges

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Vocational Education Support Unit

Statement of Understanding Between the Vocational Education Support Unit and the Special Education Support Unit

Background

The Vocational Education Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-576) has as one of its purposes the development of vocational training and retraining programs for handicapped persons.

To insure that such training is realistic with respect to the special needs of handicapped persons, the Act requires that state leadership in special education services and vocational education services enter into cooperative planning and program implementation arrangements.

Purpose

The purpose of this statement of understanding is to assure continued and augmented cooperation between the staffs of the Special Education Support Unit and the Vocational Education Support Unit of the State Department of Education in such actions as the following:

1. The joint development of provisions in the State Plan for the vocational education of handicapped persons in California
2. The joint review of those applications for funds for programs of projects providing benefits to handicapped persons.
3. The joint development of appropriate programs and project activities to meet the vocational education needs of the handicapped.
4. The joint development of appropriate inservice training of teachers for the handicapped and of vocational education teachers working with the handicapped.
5. To provide for intradepartment and interdepartment communication to facilitate program evaluation.

This statement of understanding is intended to formalize and recognize the working relationship that has long existed between these two services within the California State Department of Education.

For the Vocational Education Support Unit:

Signed: Samuel L. Barrett

State Director of Vocational Education

For the Special Education Support Unit:

Signed: Leslie Brinegar

Manager, Special Education Support Unit

Reprinted from California State Plan for Vocational Education. California State Department of Education, 1976.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Statement of Understanding Between the State Board of Education, the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, and the Department of Rehabilitation

Background

The Vocational Education Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-576) has as one of its purposes the development of vocational training and retraining programs for handicapped persons.

To insure that such training is realistic with respect to the special needs of handicapped persons, the Act requires that state leadership in special education services and vocational education services enter into cooperative arrangements.

Purpose

The purpose of this statement of understanding is to assure continued and augmented cooperation between the Department of Rehabilitation staff, the State Board staff, and the Board of Governors staff in such actions as the following:

1. The development of provisions in the State Plan for the vocational education of handicapped persons in California.
2. The review of applications for funds for programs or projects providing benefits to handicapped persons.
3. The development of appropriate programs and project activities to meet the vocational education needs of the handicapped.
4. The development of appropriate inservice training of teachers for the handicapped.
5. To provide for interdepartment communication to facilitate program evaluation.

This statement of understanding is intended to formalize the working relationship between these state agencies.

For the Department of Education and the State Board of Education:

Signed: Wilson Riles

Superintendent of Public Instruction, Director of Education, and executive secretary, State Board of Education

For the Department of Rehabilitation:

Signed: Ray Towne

Acting Director, Department of Rehabilitation

For the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges:

Signed: I. W. Braaman

Chancellor and the executive officer, Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges

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Introduction

This is one of a series of modules developed by the American Institutes for Research to improve the knowledge and skills of vocational educators who will be serving the handicapped in regular vocational education settings.

This module is designed to help you learn more about the disabling condition known as mental retardation. It deals primarily with the Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR), or mildly retarded, since these are the students who are most likely to participate in regular vocational education classes.

The general purposes of this module are:

1. To explain what mental retardation is and to explore the range of vocational capabilities of the mentally retarded student.

2. To present the vocational educator with guidelines for establishing and carrying out a plan of individualized instruction for the retarded student.

3. To provide listings of resource agencies and further readings to assist the vocational educator who is working with the mentally retarded.

The module will consider important points in setting up an individualized instructional program for mentally handicapped students. Suggestions are made for modifying existing programs to overcome problems. A section listing resource agencies and persons to contact for assistance is included. Brief review questions are provided throughout the module. An assessment section is included which will enable the vocational educator to check his understanding of the ideas presented in the module, and to apply the principles discussed to his own teaching situation.

The Educator, the Student, and the Task

What do you have to offer the mentally handicapped student in a regular vocational education class?

The Vocational Educator as a Human Resource

Education of the mentally retarded has traditionally been the province of special education. As a vocational educator you may have questions, and perhaps doubts, regarding your ability to serve the mentally retarded in a regular vocational education setting. Let's look at some concerns about teaching the mentally retarded that have been raised by other vocational educators.

> "I'm not a special education teacher. What do I, as a vocational educator, have to offer the mentally retarded?"
>
> "I'm in favor of providing vocational education for any student who can benefit from it, but shouldn't the mentally retarded be in classes geared to their special needs?"
>
> "I don't know much about mental retardation. How will the mildly retarded student in my class differ from my regular students?"
>
> "My regular classes keep me very busy. Will I have the time to set up a special program for mentally handicapped students?"
>
> "Employers just aren't going to place those kids in jobs even if I teach them the necessary skills."

These concerns of the vocational educator regarding the learning potential of the mentally retarded student, the differences between the mentally retarded and the non-handicapped student, and the ability of the mentally retarded student to fit into a regular school and work environment will be discussed in this module.

Concern: "What does the vocational educator have to offer the mentally retarded student?"

The basic needs of the mentally retarded student are no different than those of any other student in your class. He needs to develop

- Vocational skills
- Good work attitudes and habits
- Personal and social maturity

You can offer the mentally handicapped student a variety of opportunities for vocational development. Like any other student, he needs to learn the technical skills necessary to secure and maintain a job. Since his general understanding of what it means to be a worker may be very limited, you can provide experiences which increase his knowledge of vocational opportunities and responsibilities. The mentally retarded student needs to develop good work habits and attitudes, such as coming to work on time, working cooperatively with supervisors and co-workers, and caring for equipment and supplies. The mentally retarded student in your class needs opportunities to develop the personal and social maturity necessary for vocational success. Like any other student, he needs your patience, respect, confidence, and understanding while he matures as a worker. The mentally retarded student needs to develop the self-confidence and self-respect that come with competent work performance.

The importance of vocational training for the mildly retarded person cannot be overemphasized. Without special training and placement it is unlikely that he or she will be able to develop the skills necessary for productive employment. There is good reason to believe that without special vocational training the retarded person will very likely become a socially, vocationally, and perhaps emotionally, handicapped adult.

Concern:	"I'm in favor of providing vocational education for any student who can benefit from it, but shouldn't the mentally retarded be in special classes?"

The issue of special classes versus regular classes for the mentally handicapped has been much debated by educators. This module deals with the mildly, or educable mentally retarded (EMR), since these are students who are considered able to benefit from regular vocational education classes. The trainable mentally retarded (TMR) are usually trained and employed in sheltered workshops or in jobs requiring minimal skill. The functional abilities of this group are limited, and they work best under close supervision in a protected work environment. The severely and profoundly retarded usually have additional complicating handicaps, and the vocational educator would not be likely to encounter them in a regular classroom setting. While research findings indicate that students with severe handicaps generally do best in special programs, there is no clear indication that this is also true for the mildly retarded (Kirk, 1972).

Practically speaking, it seems unrealistic to train workers in a protected environment and then expect them to adapt readily to the normal pace and pressures of the work world. On the other hand, it is equally unrealistic to assume that if the retarded worker is to have a regular job he must be able to learn at the same pace as the nondisabled trainee. The mentally retarded student needs a program of instruction geared to his special needs and abilities. However, he does not require a special, segregated program in order to learn a vocational skill.

As you come to understand the special needs of the mildly retarded student, you will see that vocational education is a vital contributor to his or her development as a self-sufficient adult. As you begin to form your own ideas of ways to help the student enter the world of work, you will discover that you can offer him or her a variety of opportunities for achieving self-understanding, personal development, and social and vocational independence.

Review

► 1. What are some reasons why vocational training is particularly important for the mentally handicapped student?

► 2. Based on your present knowledge, what kinds of opportunities do you feel you are able to offer the mentally retarded?

Understanding the Mentally Retarded Student

Some societies have respected and protected the mentally different, but in most cultures competence has been rewarded while impaired functioning has been socially scorned, if not punished. Obviously, the standards used to determine "impaired functioning" vary with the social demands and values of the community. Physical stamina, acute vision and hearing, and agility are necessary for successful participation in a hunting and gathering economy. Where agriculture is the principal occupation of most of the people, moderate mental retardation may go unnoticed, providing one is able to perform his share of the physical work. The complexity of modern technological society has increased the value placed on intellectual competence, while the social rewards for physical strength have decreased accordingly. To a degree, compulsory education supports the demand for skilled workers, and those who are less able to perform academically may require special assistance if they are to develop skills and behaviors which qualify them for full participation in the society. Ours is a culture in which personal worth is frequently associated with vocational success, thus it becomes vital that all persons are provided with training which can lead to employment and independence.

Concern: "I don't know much about mental retardation."

The vocational educator is not alone in admitting that he knows very little about mental retardation. A survey in a midwestern state

(Bradley, 1964) found only one person in ten who had any specialized knowledge about this handicapping condition. Characterized by impaired intellectual functioning, mental retardation has long been surrounded by misinterpretation, controversy, and confusion.

What is Mental Retardation? Mental retardation is a term generally used to describe persons with limited intellectual ability and is frequently associated with delayed maturation and social development. Modern attempts at delineation and classification have resulted in a confusing array of groupings and terminology. This is not surprising since many disciplines, including medicine, psychology, sociology, law, and education have a vested interest in the subject. The American Association on Mental Deficiency (AAMD), an organization representing each of the concerned professional groups, has suggested the following definition:

> "Mental retardation refers to significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period." (Grossman, 1973)

The major criteria which must be met before a student is classified as retarded are:

- Academic failure or difficulty

  Grades and achievement scores fail to indicate academic growth.

- IQ score significantly below average

  The following breakdown shows the educational classifications generally used for persons with measured low intelligence.

Educational Classification	Degree of Retardation	IQ Range
Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR)	Mild	50-79
Trainable Mentally Retarded (TMR)	Moderate	25-49
Dependent Mentally Retarded	Severe Profound	Below 25

Remember, poor performance on an IQ test is not sufficient reason for regarding a student as mentally retarded. In practice, about two-thirds of those who score below 80 on such tests have not been labeled mentally retarded because they have been able either to make acceptable progress in school or to demonstrate adequate personal and social adjustment (Haring, 1974).

- Deficits in adaptive behavior

  Deficits in adaptive behavior include poor perceptual-motor development, inadequate communication skills, immature reasoning and judgement, and poor personal-social adjustment.

Causes of Mental Retardation. Well over 100 causes of mental retardation have been identified. The conditions associated with mental retardation can occur during the prenatal period, during the birth process, or during infancy and early childhood. Severe retardation is usually associated with injury or infectious disease, blood-type incompatibility, nutritional deficiency, metabolic disorders, chromosome abnormality, or other biological conditions. Mild retardation, on the other hand, is seldom traceable to a known physical cause. A family history of mental deficiency, mild vision and hearing problems, substandard nutrition and living conditions, deprived cultural environment, and an unstable home life are factors associated with mild retardation. Mild retardation seems to result from a complex interaction of hereditary and environmental conditions, and there is no conclusive evidence that any one factor directly causes the handicap.

The prevalance of mental retardation in the general population is estimated to be approximately 3 percent. Severe retardation accounts for a very small proportion of mental handicaps and is almost always associated with a known physical cause. Severe retardation tends to be evenly distributed among all cultural and economic groups. Approximately 89 percent of the mentally handicapped are considered to be mildly retarded. Unlike severe retardation, the incidence of mild retardation is considerably greater in disadvantaged communities, in the inner city and depressed rural regions, and in children from unstable home environments (Kirk, 1972).

Those who work with the mentally retarded generally agree that both heredity and environment play an important part in the determination of measured intelligence. In other words, while a student's ability to learn

is no doubt influenced by his biological makeup, it is also profoundly affected by the environment in which he lives and grows.

> Whether retardation is biological or environmental in origin, the mildly retarded student in your class is able to learn. In teaching him or her the emphasis should be placed on the student's educability, rather than on his deficiencies.

Review

1. What is meant by the term "adaptive behavior?"
2. Why does mild mental retardation become more of a problem when a child enters school?
3. What causal factors are believed to be significant in cases of mild mental retardation?

> Concern: "How will the mildly retarded student in my class differ from my regular students?"

Characteristics of Students with Measured Low Intelligence. It is understandable that the vocational educator is concerned about the differences that should be taken into account when teaching the mildly retarded. Mildly retarded students have a serious learning handicap and are not as personally and socially mature as their non-disabled classmates. However, when considered as a group they are more like regular students than they are different from them. As you become familiar with the individual strengths and weaknesses of the mildly retarded students in your class, you will realize that they are a heterogeneous group who differ as greatly among themselves as do their non-disabled classmates.

Nancy is a 15-year-old with many of the same dreams that other girls her age have. Like most of her friends, she talks on the telephone for hours about boys, clothes, and her favorite rock stars. Nancy was in special classes for the educable mentally retarded until she was in the

eighth grade. At that time she began to participate in work-study, a special program for handicapped students. This involved attending some regular classes and working at jobs in the cafeteria and in the school office. She continued to work with the special education teacher in classes on basic academic skills, self-help skills (cooking, personal grooming, money management), and pre-vocational training. The special education teacher says that Nancy's shyness and lack of self-confidence could limit her vocational development. One of the regular classes Nancy attends is business education. This year she is learning to type and to prepare envelopes and packages for mailing. Her parents are supportive and encouraging, although they realize that Nancy has to work very hard and that she may have difficulty finding a job. Although her academic potential is limited, she is learning vocational skills and has a fair understanding of the jobs which might be available to her. The work-experience coordinator is optimistic about finding an employer who will be willing to place Nancy in a trainee position as a messenger or mail room clerk.

Charles is an 18-year-old high school senior who likes to work on cars. Charles reads at third-grade level, has very limited math skills, and is classified as educable mentally retarded. Since he has difficulty understanding how an engine operates, it is unlikely that he will ever be a full-fledged auto mechanic. He is in a vocational program in automobile repair, however, and has learned to do oil changes, steam clean an engine, and do tire changes and rotations. The instructor is sure that Charles can learn to do engine tune ups and has worked out a plan that breaks each operation down into very simple steps. He learns slowly and is easily frustrated when he makes a mistake. Last year, on his own, Charles got a part-time job in a small garage. He helped clean up and assisted in engine repairs. Although his work was acceptable, Charles frequently came to work late and lost the job when he became angry and started yelling and throwing cleaning rags at a co-worker. His instructor feels that if Charles can develop a sense of time and better self-control, he will be a dependable and competent employee.

Nancy and Charles are typical of mildly retarded students participating in regular vocational education programs. The things they have in common are academic difficulty and social adjustment problems. On the other hand,

each one is an individual with his own unique set of capabilities and limitations.

Review

► 1. Based on the information you have about Nancy and Charles, what entry-level jobs within your vocational area might you consider training them for?

While it is unlikely that a generalized description will fit any individual student, it is possible to look at some characteristics common to the mildly retarded as a group.

Physical characteristics: Most mildly retarded students are of average height and weight for their age. Their physical appearance is normal, although there is evidence that in perceptual and motor skills they develop more slowly than do children of normal intelligence. Mildly retarded students are generally delayed in developing hand-eye coordination and visual and auditory discrimination, but with proper training the mildly retarded can learn many complex motor skills.

Intellectual characteristics: The mildly retarded student's intellectual development is considerably slower than that of the regular student. In practical terms, this means that he will come to your class with a lower level of basic skills and understandings than other students. He learns more slowly and is more easily confused than are students of normal intelligence. Given several trials, however, his performance of routine tasks is comparable to that of the non-retarded student. The retarded person tends to have predictable problems in dealing with abstract concepts, following directions, developing observation skills, memorizing information, and generalizing skills he has learned to other similar situations. He often misses what appears to be obvious to everyone else, and may not realize when to try a new approach to a problem. Keep in mind that whatever the task, the retarded student must see it and do it repeatedly if he is to learn it. Mildly retarded students appear to have a short attention span, although this may sometimes be due to their being given tasks which are too difficult, too easy, or otherwise inappropriate.

Academic characteristics: Academic achievement is directly related to intellectual development, and mildly retarded students progress slowly in school. Since they are unable to complete a normal year's work in a year's time, they can be expected to attain an academic level of from second to seventh grade by the time they complete high school. Mildly retarded students have deficiencies in basic academic areas such as reading, writing, and math. They also have difficulty communicating their ideas and listening to others. Keep in mind, however, that while the retarded student's academic achievement is limited by his intellectual development, it is also strongly influenced by personal and social experiences.

Personal-social characteristics: The mildly retarded child matures slowly. At every stage of development he is expected to behave in ways which are beyond his physical, mental, and emotional capabilities. Academic difficulties tend to increase as he progresses in school, and by the time the mildly retarded student reaches high school he has usually acquired an ingrained sense of failure. Because of limited reasoning and judgment abilities, his behavior is often inappropriate. Although there is no evidence that low intelligence per se produces any particular personality characteristics, the experience of chronic confusion and failure understandably shapes the retarded child's attitudes and behavior. It is likely that the greater incidence of emotional and behavior problems among the retarded is a result of the high degree of stress and frustration they experience in meeting everyday challenges. Although he may appear to lack motivation, the retarded student often displays remarkable ingenuity in avoiding situations which may lead to further failure. The need to avoid failure may become so great that the student simply refuses to try anything. This pattern of failure and withdrawl, often called the "defeat cycle," characterizes the experience of many retarded persons.

The vocational educator is in an excellent position to help the student interrupt the "defeat cycle" described above. By providing concrete tasks which the retarded student can see and do, the vocational program may lead the mildly retarded student out of the "defeat cycle" toward a meaningful and productive adult life.

Occupational characteristics: Surveys show that 80 percent of persons who have been classified as mentally retarded are eventually employed in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs (Kirk, 1972). In general, the evidence seems to indicate the following:

- When properly placed, the retarded perform as efficiently as do persons of normal intelligence.
- On simple or routine tasks their efficiency often exceeds that of non-handicapped employees, and they tire less quickly.
- On routine tasks, the retarded evidence a high degree of job satisfaction and have less tardiness, absenteeism, and job turnover than do employees of normal intelligence.
- Failure on unskilled or semi-skilled jobs is generally related to personal, social, and interpersonal characteristics rather than to an inability to perform assigned tasks.
- A stable family situation and some contact with rehabilitation agencies greatly enhances the retarded person's vocational potential.

Brolin (1976) reports that in a federal program (where the usual civil service hiring procedures were eliminated) nearly 5 percent of the mentally retarded persons who were involved received higher than average ratings and more than 13 percent had been promoted. Of the 7 percent that were laid off, social adjustment problems played an important role.

Range of capabilities: Although all mildly retarded students are behind their non-disabled classmates in intellectual development, they vary greatly among themselves in ability and personal maturity. Whatever his potential, the retarded student's academic and personal growth is strongly influenced by home life and school experiences. If these are positive, the student has a much better chance of becoming a responsible adult.

- Reading and communication skills, and motor coordination are important for vocational development. Mildly retarded persons with serious problems in these areas can and should be provided training to remedy the deficiencies.

- Retarded persons vary greatly in self-understanding, temperament, and emotional maturity.
- Like non-disabled persons, the mildly retarded differ greatly in physical stamina and persistence necessary for carrying out job tasks.
- Students who have had prevocational training and experiences will be much more aware of occupational areas, work responsibilities, and realistic vocational goals than will those who have not.

Review

1. What are the three major criteria which set the mildly retarded apart from regular students?
2. What is the significance of the statement, "about two-thirds of those who score below 80 on IQ tests have not been labeled mentally retarded..."?
3. Describe the "defeat cycle" which typically characterizes the experience of the retarded student. How can the vocational educator help to interrupt this cycle?
4. What do occupational surveys indicate as the primary factor in failure of retarded persons to perform successfully in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs?

Considering Job Tasks

It has been pointed out that when properly trained and placed retarded persons are able to perform a variety of job tasks successfully. Thus, the question for the vocational educator becomes one of how to teach the skills in a particular vocational area to mentally retarded students. By this time you should have a pretty good idea of what mental retardation is, and how it affects an individual's ability to learn and carry out a job task. You are aware that the mildly retarded student has a serious learning handicap, and yet you are also aware that he is capable of learning some pretty complex skills given the right training and motivation to learn.

The next step is to consider very carefully the nature of the specific tasks the student will need to master in order to become

competent in a particular vocational area. No doubt, there are some technical skills which require theoretical understandings and independent judgments which are beyond the capabilities of many mildly retarded students. It has been repeatedly demonstrated, however, that retarded students can learn complex skills and perform them competently and reliably when properly trained.

It is often assumed that we know the specific level of ability required to perform a given task. As a matter of fact, the area of job skills analysis is not well developed, and many tasks when analyzed are well within the capabilities of the mildly retarded student. Here are some factors you will need to consider when developing an instructional program for the mentally handicapped.

Basic Skills Considerations. The mildly retarded student's levels of reading comprehension, computation skills, and general information and reasoning abilities will be below those of his non-disabled classmates. You will need to determine the level of academic proficiency necessary for specific job tasks. In performing a task, will the student be required to follow written instructions? Will he have to measure or weigh or count things? Is sorting or arranging in order required? You may be surprised to discover the number of "common sense" understandings which may not be taken for granted in the case of the mildly retarded student.

Sensory-Motor Considerations. There is a good chance that the mildly retarded student will be able to handle manual operations with considerably less difficulty than those requiring academic proficiency. His sensory motor skills develop slowly however, and he may have problems with motor tasks considered appropriate for his age-level. Therefore, in analyzing a task you should be aware of movement and coordination requirements. Does the task involve fine motor skills such as manipulating small parts or tools like nuts, bolts, and tweezers? Does it require complex visual-motor coordination such as watching dials or controls while operating equipment? What general level of coordination is required? Will he have to use his hands and feet at the same time?

Work Tolerance Considerations. The ability to carry through with a task is largely a function of 1) physical stamina and 2) motivation. Obviously, some tasks require considerable physical strength for carrying or lifting. Other tasks, while within the physical capacity of a student, may call for an extended expenditure of energy. In evaluating a task you should consider not only how much strength is required, but also what kind and for how long. Since the retarded student's physical capabilities are much like those of the nonretarded, this should be considered but should not present a serious problem.

Motivation Considerations. Persistence at a task depends heavily on motivational factors, and while a student's ability to follow through on a task is admittedly influenced by personal considerations such as maturity, self-confidence, and rapport with his instructor, some assignments are simply more appealing than others. It is generally true that retarded individuals are more satisfied performing repetitive tasks than are persons of normal intelligence. There is no indication that they enjoy difficult or unpleasant working conditions any more than anyone else does. The retarded student may not be aware of external motivational factors inherent in a job such as high wages, good fringe benefits and opportunity for building job skills toward advancement. Specifically emphasizing desirable aspects of a job which may not be apparent to the student can help him to develop a more positive work attitude.

Cognitive Considerations. The mentally retarded student's intellectual abilities are limited, but he can learn many complex tasks if careful consideration is given in advance to potential problem areas.

- How concrete is the task? Are the required operations observable and easily demonstrated? Will the student need an understanding of abstract processes in order to perform the task? Retarded persons have difficulty seeing processes, while concrete actions are more readily observed and understood.

- How complex is the task? How many separate operations are required? If several operations are required, are they related to each other in a way the student can easily see and understand?

- Is the task repetitive, or does it involve a series of operations? A repetitive task may be learned easily, while a series of different operations must be broken down, allowing adequate learning time for each one.

- Is this task similar to one that the student already knows how to do? While the retarded student has difficulty generalizing previously learned skills to a new task, he will be able to learn new tasks more easily if it is pointed out that it is like something he already knows how to do.

- Does the task require independent judgments? When analyzing a job, ask yourself whether or not the student will have to make decisions at points along the way in order to complete the task. The retarded person may become confused when presented with a situation requiring a flexible, problem-solving approach.

- Is the task relevant to the learner? Is the task clearly related to a goal which the student wants to achieve? A student may not readily see the connection between a specific task (stacking dishes) and a long range employment goal (a job in a hotel or restaurant).

Personal-Social Considerations. Remember that the mildly retarded student probably is not as mature as the student of normal intelligence. Although he may appear to be pleasant and cooperative, his emotional stability and social judgment may not be taken for granted. What level of emotional and behavioral maturity does the task call for? Will the student have close supervision or will he be expected to work on his own? Will he have to work cooperatively with other students? Will he be dealing with the public? Perhaps most important, is the task within his present range of capabilities? Frustration, a sense of failure, and behavior problems can result from a student's being given a task that is too difficult.

Communication Considerations. Keep in mind the limited verbal skills of the retarded student. How much does performance of the task depend on written or oral communication? Will he have to use the telephone? Will he have to write messages, work reports, or fill out forms? Will his work be dependent on receiving frequent verbal feedback? If so, is it likely to be in terms he can understand?

Facilities Considerations. Is the student familiar with the facility? Does he know where his own work area, locker and tools and supplies are located? If he will be required to travel to a work assignment, is transportation available?

The vocational educator serving mildly retarded students in a regular class should have:

- A positive attitude
- Knowledge about mental retardation and how it affects vocational development
- An understanding of the level of ability required to perform specific job tasks.

Whether or not you will be able to teach the mildly retarded the job skills in your vocational area depends on factors such as these. Your enthusiasm and willingness to help him learn are your most valuable assets. If you are willing to look at the retarded student as an individual, leaving labels and stereotyped ideas behind; if you see him as a person who has a right to learn a trade and live a useful productive life; if you do not see him as someone who must be cared for by those more capable than himself --you will be able to work with him effectively.

Review

► 1. Choose a job task in your vocational field and analyze it in relation to the level of ability required in the following areas:

Basic skills
Sensory-motor development
Work tolerance level
Cognitive ability
Personal and social maturity
Communication skills

Establishing a Plan for Individual Instruction

> "How would you set up a program of instruction for mentally retarded students?"

Your understanding of mental retardation and how it affects vocational development can provide a basis for planning a program of instruction for mentally handicapped students. Each student, whatever his intellectual potential, learns in his own way. Your regular curriculum is designed to meet the needs of individual students, and this kind of flexibility is particularly important when modifying a program for training the mentally handicapped.

> Concern: "Will I have the time to set up a special program for mentally handicapped students?"

The key word to remember is modification. In planning instruction for the mildly retarded student you will need to consider your regular curriculum and training procedures in light of what you know about mental retardation in general, and your student in particular. You will not have to set up a special program or invent a new curriculum.

In modifying your regular program for mildly retarded students you will need to:

- Obtain basic background information about the student
- Set goals and criteria appropriate to the individual
- Consider the instructional framework
- Contact persons and agencies for assistance

Obtaining Basic Background Information About the Student

Information You Can Use. Useful information about the student's academic history, developmental and health history, personal and social development, and vocational readiness can come from various sources. Conferences with the student and other persons who know him are valuable, but don't overlook the use of objective tests of ability, proficiencies, and interests. Remember, many, if not most mildly retarded students may not be sufficiently aware of vocational opportunities to formulate realistic goals. Also, simple observation may reveal more about what a retarded student can't do than what he can.

Academic history: You already know that the mildly retarded student has a learning handicap. In planning a program of individual instruction you may want to look at past school performance.

- Achievement tests are probably the method most widely used to assess basic academic skills and give you an idea of the grade level at which a student reads, communicates, and does math.
- Check the student's past grade records. They can tell you a lot about actual academic performance. Areas in which a student has done well may indicate a special interest or ability.
- While we have discussed the limitations of IQ tests as a measure of overall ability, IQ scores can give you an idea of a student's academic potential. If IQ scores show that a student is not performing academically as well as he might, tutoring or other remedial strategies may be indicated.
- Reports from other teachers who have worked with the student are useful. Keep in mind that information from others may be biased, but don't disregard it.

Developmental and health history: In addition to pointing out limitations in employment potential, an accurate picture of the student's physical condition and level of development often reveals problems which are correctable.

- Check the student's general health. Conditions such as seizures, chronic illness, or limited strength should be noted if they may affect vocational goals or employment.

- If the student has vision or hearing problems, check to see if remedial treatment has been prescribed and carried out.

- If speech problems are indicated, they may be correctable through speech therapy or surgery.

- Check for evidence of brain damage or neurological impairment which might affect physical coordination. Physical therapy and home exercises can often improve motor skills.

- If attendance records show frequent absences due to illness, check to see if the absences are due to a condition which is treatable.

Personal and social development: Vocational failure of retarded persons is frequently due to poor personal and social development. Any serious attempt to prepare the retarded for employment must take this into account.

- Some tests of social maturity and vocational readiness are effective with the mildly retarded and can indicate the student's level of personal and social development.

- Counseling records can indicate areas of social maladjustment such as delinquency, disruptive behavior in school, social isolation, and emotional disturbance.

- Students from ethnic or racial minorities may have adjustment problems associated with conflicting social values and difficulty with standard English.

- Parents' attitudes toward the student and his handicap, and a stable and supportive home environment are important factors in personal and social development.

Vocational readiness: Retarded students are often unaware of employment opportunities and responsibilities. Prevocational training, work evaluation, skills tests, and work experience are some of the ways students can be helped to develop work readiness before vocational training begins.

- Talk with the student. Does he express any particular vocational interests? Does he seem to have a realistic picture of his own abilities and jobs that might be available?

- Vocational aptitudes may be indicated by skill tests and work sampling.

- The student who has had prevocational training should be better prepared for job training than one who has not. Has the student had any prevocational training? This includes awareness of vocational areas, health and safety practices, following directions, understanding employer/employee relations, and job-hunting skills.

- Does the student have existing job skills acquired in previous vocational education courses and work related experience?

Where to Get the Information. Here are some of the sources you can check.

Academic History	Sources
• Achievement test scores • Courses taken and grades • Teachers' reports	• Special educator, work-study coordinator, counselor, psychologist
Developmental and Health History	**Sources**
• Mental Ability, Adaptive behavior	• Special educator, counselor
• General physical health	• School nurse, school health records, private physician
• Vision, hearing, speech	• Ophthalmologist, speech and hearing therapist
• Physical coordination	• P.E. teacher, physical therapist
• Attendance	• Counselor
Personal and Social Development	**Sources**
• Objective tests of development	• Special educators, counselor school psychologist
• Social adjustment problems	• Special educators, counselor
• Student's feelings about self	• Conferences with student
• Family stability and involvement	• Teachers, counselor, parents
• Cultural/ethnic factors	• Counselor, parents

Vocational Readiness	Sources
• Prevocational training • Existing job skills • Vocational aptitudes and interests • Realistic appraisal of self and jobs	• Special educator, work-study coordinator, school counselor, conferences with student, rehabilitation counselor, or other community agency assessment center

How to Interpret the Information. We have looked at a great many potential sources of background information. Perhaps the heading for this section should be "Everything You Need to Know About Joe Brown... And Much, Much More." However, you will find that while records are very complete for some students, for others this may not be the case. Remember you are not working alone. Your goal is to develop a picture of the whole person and while collecting the information that you feel is important you can expect assistance from the special educator, school psychologist, counselor, and others.

A team approach should be emphasized in planning and implementing a program of instruction. First and foremost, you should enlist the cooperation of the special educator in interpreting the information and subsequently in determining realistic goals for the individual student, developing a workable plan of instruction, and dealing with any problems that arise. The special educator in your school may be a special class teacher, a resource teacher assigned to work with you in training the handicapped student, or an itinerant teacher who is available for a given period of time each week.

Review

► 1. In your opinion, what background information would help you in setting up a plan of instruction for a mildly retarded student?

► 2. In your school, whom would you contact for the following information about a school:

achievement test scores
general physical health
attendance
social adjustment
prevocational training

► 3. What is meant by a "team approach" to instructional planning? In your school, what personnel might be on a planning team for a handicapped student coming into your regular class?

Setting Goals and Criteria Appropriate to the Individual

The retarded vary greatly in ability and personal maturity. Although many retarded persons are able to work competitively with the non-retarded in a wide variety of jobs, they are frequently placed in manual or unskilled positions. It is difficult to predict what you can expect of the mildly retarded student in terms of vocational development. Their academic performance is often poor and does not necessarily reflect vocational potential, which often proves to be adequate with proper training and placement. Pre-training evaluation is recommended, but even careful evaluation can only suggest a student's potential, and should not be used in a way which limits vocational growth.

You will want to involve the student as much as possible in setting his own vocational goals, However, it is a good idea to do some preliminary planning in order to present the student with some clearly defined jobs, tasks, and products which he will be completing in the course.

Setting Individualized Course Goals. Begin by looking at your regular course in terms of what you know about mental retardation, and about the individual students in your class. Several levels of planning should be considered when setting course goals for mildly retarded students.

- Job goals. While you should avoid stereotyping the mentally retarded person as a manual or unskilled worker, you should determine in advance what jobs might be appropriate for him or her. The student needs to have a concrete understanding of the job goal. Review the jobs you normally train students for, keeping in mind the qualities and characteristics of the mildly retarded that have been discussed in this module.

- Task goals. Analyze the jobs you have chosen, specifying what task competencies are required. Don't exclude a particular job because it involves tasks which are difficult, but nevertheless may be possible, for the retarded student to perform. Remain flexible and look for ways to train that are suited to the characteristics of the individual student.

- Sub-tasks. Break each task into specific sub-tasks. You will need to break complex tasks into sub-tasks, since the more specific you can be about exactly what the student must do, the more effective his training is likely to be. A job-task analysis is helpful, and if you customarily break job tasks down in some fashion you should be able to plan instruction based on specific work competencies to be learned.

In setting training goals for mildly retarded students, you should decide when to emphasize skills which can be generalized to may job situations, and when to focus training on particular marketable skills. General skills such as clean-up, care of tools, and safety procedures can and should be taught to all students, along with the idea that these practices are to be followed in every work situation. A good rule-of-thumb is: the more complex the job, the more specific the training should be. Mildly retarded students usually have difficulty applying skills learned in a particular situation to different job tasks.

Vocational training for retarded students should involve broad work-related objectives as well as narrow task-oriented goals. These broader goals need not be formulated in precise detail, but should be concrete and clear to the student. Talking about being on time is not as effective as demonstrating how to use a time clock. Showing the student where to keep

his tools is better than telling him he must maintain an orderly work area. As the student becomes a part of your regular class, you should make it clear that the ability to work with others, to work alone, to take responsibility, and to accept supervision are important aspects of getting and keeping a job. Discuss these kinds of goals with the student, making each one as concrete as possible.

Performance criteria should be concrete and explicit. In establishing work goals, desirable work habits, and necessary social skills, let the student know how his performance will be judged. He will be much more relaxed if he knows exactly what he is expected to do or produce. Vague criteria may confuse him and affect his work performance. Productivity goals may not be meaningful at first, but the student needs to become aware of time as a factor in task performance. Plan a flexible schedule which allows him to proceed at his own pace until he gains skills and confidence.

Planning With the Student. You can establish some possible training goals based on what you know about the student and the job market. However, vocational decisions should involve the student as much as possible so that he comes to realize that he can change his life and achieve what he sets out to do.

The prospect of learning job skills is exciting, and there is a good chance that the mildly retarded student will be eager to learn what you have to teach. Your enthusiasm, and your confidence in his ability to learn, are very important at this point.

Review any previous vocational experiences he may have had. Don't worry if the student seems to have a limited awareness of the particular vocational area he will be learning about in your class. Remember that talking about jobs with the mildly retarded is often ineffective. The student may need a chance to see and do some job tasks before he is able to participate in making realistic vocational decisions.

As an initial step in cooperative planning with the student, it is a good idea to demonstrate the activities he will be doing in your class, and provide him with some simple hands-on experiences. This gives the student a feeling for what to expect, as well as giving you the opportunity to observe how he handles himself in a vocational setting. Goal setting can begin here, but should remain flexible until you gain a better understanding of the student's actual needs and capabilities.

Review

You have learned that a mildly retarded student would like to be enrolled in your regular class this year.

► 1. In talking with the special educator, what kinds of decisions will have to be made regarding 1) job goals, 2) task goals, and 3) performance standards?

► 2. What general skills (safety, clean-up) would you consider essential for the student to learn? What, if any, special instruction may be needed?

► 3. How do you plan to involve the student in setting his own goals?

Considering the Instructional Framework

Taking Advantage of Resources in the School. Various school personnel, parents, and other students can assist you in planning and carrying out an individualized training program for the mentally handicapped student. Audiovisual instruction has been used successfully in programs for the mildly retarded. You should check the availability of audiovisual equipment and teaching materials in your school.

The special educator is your key resource in planning and carrying out a training program for mentally handicapped students. He or she can assist you in understanding each student's unique learning capabilities and help you in making modifications in your regular curriculum. The special educator should be notified of deficiencies which limit the student's vocational development, since he or she is in the best position to arrange remedial instruction or other corrective measures.

The student's counselor can be consulted on behavior or adjustment problems, and will also be able to assist you in understanding the student's academic difficulties. The counselor can familiarize you with the student's home situation, which can have a significant effect on his vocational development.

The work experience coordinator should be acquainted with the student long before he or she is ready for actual on-the-job work experience. Mentally handicapped students who are being trained in regular classes should have the benefit of work-experience, since they need the opportunity to work in actual work settings before they are placed in a job. You should contact the work-experience coordinator for information about current work-experience opportunitites for the mentally handicapped. He can assist you in preparing the student for this transitional experience between school and work.

Do not hesitate to involve the student's parents at any stage of training and placement. Family support can make the difference between successful and unsuccessful work adjustment. Sometimes parents or other family members can fill you in on information you need, and can provide a link between the student, the school, and work placement.

Your regular students can serve as tutors or role models, demonstrating assigned work tasks and expected work habits and behavior. You can encourage a positive relationship among all the students in your class, and the mentally handicapped student's learning pace need not set him apart. Successful participation in a regular school and work environment enables the handicapped student to overcome feelings of inferiority or isolation and greatly enhances his chance of achieving his full vocational potential.

In addition to human resources, your school may also offer instructional aids in the form of audiovisual materials. Audiovisual aids include programmed learning series and teaching machines, tape recordings, video taped instruction, slides, cassettes, and film strips. These are particularly valuable for several reasons. For the retarded, visual presentation may be more effective than talking or explaining a task to the student. If instruction is on film or videotape, the student can review it often, practicing

until he can do it on his own. Films have the advantage of being visual and repetitious when necessary, and can be geared to the student's level of understanding. Cassettes, can be used for step-by-step instruction. They can be played repeatedly by the student working on his own, thus providing valuable reinforcement and encouraging the student to become more independent.

Resources in the community. Because he needs to see concrete examples and because his vocational awareness is usually limited, the retarded student can profit from many resources found in the community.

- On field trips to business and industry he can see work being done, meet employers and other workers, and begin to develop a concrete understanding of what his vocational training is all about.
- Classroom discussions based on information about jobs found in newspapers and magazines are also good for this purpose. Discussions should be brief, simple, and to the point.
- Employers in the community may be willing to provide job-tryout opportunities early in a student's vocational training. If properly arranged, this exposure can be a positive and motivating experience for the student, as well as affording the vocational educator the opportunity to observe the student in a real work situation.
- The State Department of Rehabilitation offers assistance in pre-training assessment, vocational counseling, and placement to retarded persons of or near employment age. Your student may be eligible for this assistance.
- Private agencies such as Goodwill Industries and Hope for Retarded Citizens sometimes offer vocational services similar to those provided by the State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Such agencies can provide a vital link between school and employment, and contact with them greatly enhances a student's vocational future.
- The National Association for Retarded Citizens has an on-the-job training project. This program offers up to 50% reimbursement to employers for compensation paid during the first 60 hours a student spends in on-the-job training. Public schools students may qualify for this program if they average at least 20 hours per week of on-site training. You may contact the NARC field representative in your community for further information about this program.

In review, consider the following resources when planning an instructional program:

In the School	In the Community
Resource personnel	Field trips to business and industry
Library materials	Newspapers and magazines
Programmed learning	Employers
Taped instruction	Public and private agencies
Slides and filmstrips	NARC on-the-job training project
Video taped instruction	

Work Area. Although extensive changes in physical facilities will not be necessary for the mentally retarded student, you will want to give some consideration to the student's work area, tool storage area, and locker space. The student should have a clearly designated work area. Care of tools and equipment should be included as a part of the instructional program. Remember that the retarded student may not pick up incidental information that is not specifically taught and reinforced. Although it may seem obvious that certain care and maintenance procedures should be followed, you should demonstrate and encourage care of tools and work area. Keep the work area simple and uncluttered. The mildly retarded student learns best when he works on one problem or project at a time, and a cluttered work area may be confusing to him.

Review

1. What audio-visual equipment might be useful to you in training a mildly retarded student? Are such materials and equipment available in your school?
2. What community resources can you think of that would be of value in working with a mentally handicapped student?

Curriculum. Naturally, you will use your basic curriculum, since you are preparing the mildly retarded student to do jobs which are essentially similar to those for which you train regular students. In modifying your regular curriculum, as well as building individual instructional plans for each student, you should work closely with the special educator who is responsible for the student's overall educational program. It is most important that vocational courses be supported by classes in basic education and general living skills. The retarded student benefits from an integrated program which takes into account his general level of educational and social development.

Some points to keep in mind:

- Even after careful evaluation, the student's vocational potential is yet to be proven. Therefore, flexibility is essential in goal setting, training methods and evaluation.
- In planning instruction, try to include lessons which will help the student develop problem solving skills. He needs to learn that a tool can be used for several different types of operations, and that a process can apply to different situations.
- Include lessons on safety which emphasize careful use of power tools, general shop safety, and proper use of safety equipment such such as gloves, goggles, safety boots, etc.

Methodology. The mildly retarded student can be trained in essentially the same manner as your non-disabled students. Training will generally take longer, but quite a lot is known about how mentally retarded persons learn. By considering your regular curriculum in terms of the learning characteristics of the mentally retarded, you can set up a plan of instruction that is very effective.

Interest and motivation are critical factors in learning. Try to involve the student in class activity from the beginning. Be sure he understands what is happening, and let him become familiar with the work area, tools, and other students. In the very beginning, give him tasks which are simple and fail-proof. If the student has an expectancy to fail,

which is common among the mildly retarded, initial success will start him in a more positive direction. Don't let the student fall into an appearance of boredom or disinterest. This may be a cover-up for fear or lack of self-confidence. Encouragement and positive reinforcement are essential at all stages of training, but are particularly important at the beginning. Motivation aids such as progress charts, and tangible rewards such as use of new tools and equipment can increase motivation. Make sure vocational tasks are clearly related to concrete rewards such as getting a job and receiving a paycheck.

Instruction should be

- Organized. Look over your instructional plan. Are steps of instruction logical and do they clearly follow each other? Is later instruction based on material already learned?
- Specific. The student needs to know exactly what he must do. He may not be able to see obvious connections unless they are pointed out.
- Visual. Whenever possible demonstrate what must be done. Use films, slides, drawings, and simple charts and diagrams.
- Spaced in small steps. Instruction should be presented in small increments with time for practice.
- Repeated and checked. Instruction should be repeated at spaced intervals. Check often to see if the student can demonstrate that he understands.
- Overlearned. Allow time for overlearning. Check periodically to see if the student remembers important operations, and encourage him to practice them.
- Reinforced. Praise the student for work accomplished, no matter how small the task. Make it clear that new assignments are the result of satisfactory performance. "You've done a good job of soldering these wires, how would you like to begin soldering resistors to terminals?"

As children grow, they learn many things from their environment that assist them in understanding the world, the culture they live in, and themselves. Without conscious effort they pick up facts and ideas from their parent's conversations, movies and TV, and their own observations. This is

called incidental learning, and it is a very significant factor in a child's growth. However, mildly retarded children often miss what is not brought directly to their attention. For this reason, you should plan instruction very systematically, making sure you have included everything the student will need to know.

The importance of allowing the mildly retarded student sufficient practice trials cannot be overemphasized. Work with the mildly retarded has shown clearly that while initial performance is well below average, with sufficient practice performance of routine tasks equals that of many non-disabled persons.

A Self-Check. Before you actually start training take time to check yourself.

- How do you feel about working with a mildly retarded student? Do you feel confident that you can help him to become a part of your class and learn vocational skills?
- Do you have background information you need on the student?
- Have you contacted the special educator who works with the student, and have you received help from him/her in setting up a plan of instruction?
- Have you considered your regular curriculum in terms of this student's special needs, and are you satisfied that you have established a workable plan for his training?

Your positive attitude toward the mildly retarded student is the most important resource you have to offer. Your patience, confidence, and understanding are necessary parts of the training process.

Review

► 1. What is incidental learning? Why do you need to be aware of the importance of incidental learning when working with mildly retarded students?

► 2. Consider your regular curriculum in terms of this statement:
Retarded students learn best when instruction is

organized
specific
visual
spaced in small steps
repeated and checked
overlearned
reinforced.

Keeping this in mind, what modifications might you need to make wher training a mentally handicapped student?

Planning for Assessment

The trainee's progress should be closely monitored. The mildly retarded student may not ask for help when he doesn't understand instructions, or he may not realize when he is performing a task incorrectly. Regular checks of the student's work progress allow you to give frequent positive feedback, as well as a chance to correct mistakes before they become problems.

Basically, assessment should be handled the same as for regular students. However, you should keep the following points in mind when planning evaluation procedures.

Testing. The mildly retarded student does not usually do well on tests. Written tests used for the rest of the class may be beyond his capabilities, and unless geared to his level, should be avoided. Rather than involving him in formal testing situations, it is a good idea to check his work regularly, keeping a record of progress and problems. Mildly retarded persons do not work well under pressure, and tests may be threatening to them. Consequently, test results are often inaccurate measures of actual work competence.

Criterion Referenced Assessment. Assessment measures based on class averages (normative-referenced) are inappropriate, since they make a comparison between the retarded student and his non-disabled classmates.

Although he is being trained in the same occupational area, his job level, competencies to be learned, and time allotted to master a task may be different than those of the regular student. Criterion-referenced assessment, in which the standards for judging the student's work performance have been matched with the individual goals set for him in the vocational education program, are much more meaningful.

Some additional points to keep in mind about assessment:

- Make sure the student understands how his work will be evaluated.
- Competencies developed and products completed should be relevant to employers.
- In the beginning, maintain a flexible schedule for work completion and evaluation.
- Assessment should be planned to highlight problem areas, and provide the basis for program modifications.

Review

1. What changes, if any, would you make in assessment procedures for the mildly retarded student?
2. What are the drawbacks in using formal tests when training retarded students?
3. Why are comparisons between the work progress of mentally handicapped students and regular students inappropriate? How can you plan assessment so as to avoid making such comparisons?

Carrying Out a Plan of Individual Instruction

> How will you monitor progress and overcome problems which arise during training?

You are now ready to put your plans into action. Careful planning serves as the basis for an effective program, and will enable you to make necessary modifications as training progresses.

Indicators of Vocational Growth

Your plans for a program of individualized training should include objective measures of proficiency, as well as observational evidence of vocational growth. Both kinds of information are important, and both can be used to modify and improve the instructional program.

Objective Measures of Proficiencies. Objective measures of proficiency include:

- checklist of skills mastered
- checklist of equipment the student can operate
- checklist of social competencies demonstrated
- progress charts

Maintaining good records of progress enables you to judge a student's employability in terms of what employers want and need. Also, checklists such as these can be used to motivate the student, since he is able to observe his own progress and is encouraged to maintain it.

Observational Evidence of Vocational Growth. Your personal observations of the student's progress are very important. Often, vocational growth cannot be measured by hard indicators such as checklists, progress charts, and grades. Although these are necessary, you may observe progress which is not indicated on the records you keep. Maturity, judgment, self-confidence, and interpersonal skills are difficult to measure but are as important as is skill acquisition.

Improving Instructor Performance

After instruction begins, you will no doubt find areas which were missed in preliminary planning.

Filling in Gaps in Background Information. In the section of this module on information you can use for planning instruction, we listed many kinds of information. As training progresses, questions may arise which can be answered by checking some of the resources listed. We have stressed that you are not working alone in the vocational preparation of mildly retarded students. Close cooperation between the vocational educator and others concerned with the student's academic and social growth can enable training to progress smoothly.

Improving Communication and Rapport. Establishing an environment in which the student can grow and learn begins before actual training starts. However, as you work with the student, you will have many opportunities to increase your understanding and appreciation of his abilities and aspirations. You relationship with the student, as his teacher and friend, can serve as a model for his future relationship with an employer.

Your personal relationship with the student will enable you to understand his individual strengths and weaknesses, and as instruction progresses you should become more able to develop a program suited to his needs.

Overcoming Instructional Problems

Blocks to progress can come at any step along the way. Some steps you can take in dealing with such problems are:

1. Try to determine the specific nature of the difficulty. A problem can be centered in the goal that has been set, the instructional process, or a student's level of personal maturity.

2. Talk the problem over with the student. Perhaps together you can arrive at alternative solutions.

3. Consult with other members of the instructional team who are specialists in dealing with instructional problems.

4. Check your time schedule. Perhaps the student is not being allowed sufficient time to master a skill.

5. Can assistance from aides or other students in the class be used to overcome the problem?

It may be difficult to separate academic or training difficulties from problems of personal or social adjustment. As we discussed earlier, the mildly retarded student is likely to be less mature personally and socially than his non-disabled classmates.

Behavior problems can be caused by immaturity, frustration, or a feeling of isolation from the regular class. Such problems may come to your attention through aggressive behavior, withdrawal, refusal to participate, or overdependence on the instructor. While you are not expected to serve as a behavior therapist, these problems do become your responsibility to the extent that they interfere with vocational development.

How can you help the student develop more mature attitudes and behavior, and improve his work readiness?

- First, be specific about behavior that interferes with work performance. Some unusual behavior may be tolerated by an employer if it doesn't interfere with productivity or inconvenience other workers.

- State clearly what behaviors are inappropriate. Write them down.

- Determine alternative behavior that would improve the student's employability.

- Discuss the problems with the student, and help him to understand the importance of changing his behavior. Try to get his cooperation in making desired changes.

- Reward the student when he behaves appropriately. Positive reinforcement is a powerful motivator.

- Keep a record of the student's progress. Make sure he is rewarded for even small changes in the desired direction.

Changing behavior is a complex process. The special educator, school psychologist, or counselor can help you plan effective procedures to help the student develop more productive work habits and personal maturity.

Review

1. What are the two major types of indicators of vocational growth? Do you consider it essential to use both types in evaluating a student's work progress?
2. What steps are useful in overcoming instructional problems?
3. What action can be taken in dealing with a student's behavior problems?

Periodic Review of Progress

Check the student's vocational and personal progress frequently. Involve the student at every stage, making sure he understands any changes in his program or method of instruction.

Modifying the Program. Program modifications can and should happen when the student is either greatly exceeding expected work performance, or is falling considerably behind the goals you have set together. Failure at assigned tasks should be avoided whenever possible. It is better for the student to work slowly, learning very small parts of each task well, than for him to attempt to meet goals which may have been set beyond his capabilities. You will need to become familiar with the student's work pace and abilities, and be ready to make changes in his program when necessary. Program development is a continuous process, and the best program for the mildly retarded student is one that is responsive to changes in his work abilities and attitudes.

Documenting Progress. Since program review and modification is a continuous process, you should keep adequate written records of the student's progress and training outcomes. Adequate written records will make it possible for you to communicate clearly with other persons who are involved in the student's instructional program.

Approaching and Working With Employers

> Concern: "Employers just aren't going to place those kids in jobs even if I teach them the necessary skills."

While it is true that many employers have doubts about hiring mentally handicapped workers, they are generally unaware of the advantages that this group, when properly trained and placed, offer an employer. In reviewing the vocational characteristics of the mildly retarded we find that they often prove to be productive and reliable workers, and that there are many kinds of jobs at which they have been trained to work successfully.

Student placement can be the responsiblity of the vocational educator, the work-experience coordinator, the school counselor, the vocational rehabilatation worker, or other school or state personnel designated to handle the task.

Whatever his official placement responsibilities might be, the vocational educator is in an excellent position to develop and maintain a relationship with employers in his field who will hire handicapped workers.

The vocational educator who understands the capabilities and limitations of the mentally handicapped, and who is familiar with the particular work competencies of the mildly retarded student he has trained, has several advantages in dealing with employers.

- He understands the employer's general needs and specific job requirements.
- He can speak knowledgeably and frankly about the student's work skills and overall work performance.
- Since working with mildly retarded students is not his particular area of expertise, the vocational educator can appreciate the position of the employer who is experiencing some doubts about hiring a mentally handicapped worker.
- The vocational educator is aware of the rights of the handicapped to live and work independently, and can help the employer to increase his own awareness of the rights and potentials of this group.

Review

► 1. You are aware of a job opening which you feel confident the mildly retarded student in your class could fill successfully.

a) How would you approach the employer regarding hiring the student you have trained?

b) What reservations might he have about hiring the student?

c) How would you respond to the employer's negative feelings in this situation?

After the Student Leaves Your Class

Hopefully, your relationship with the student will enable you to be a source of encouragement to him as he continues his vocational development. Your knowledge of the mentally handicapped student, gained through working with him in a vocational training class, is a valuable resource to others who will be working with the student after he leaves your class. Because his work adjustment is crucial to independent adult living, and is not easily achieved or maintained, any assistance you can offer to other teachers, vocational rehabilitation personnel, or employers is vitally needed.

* * * * *

In this module we have tried to give the vocational educator a realistic understanding of mild mental retardation and its consequences for vocational development. Our purpose has not been to underestimate the difficulties of teaching mentally handicapped students. For most vocational educators, teaching the mentally handicapped is a new and challenging experience. Rather, we have focused on the rights of the mildly retarded student to vocational preparation, and the exciting possibilities and potential which, for the most part, remain underdeveloped in this group of students.

REFERENCES

Bradley, B. H. Public Impressions of the mentally retarded. Mental Retardation Abstracts, 1964, 1, 47.

Brolin, Donn. Vocational preparation of retarded citizens. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1976.

Grossman, Herbert J. (Ed.). Manual on terminology and classification. Washington, D.C.: American Association on Mental Deficiency, 1973.

Haring, N. C. Behavior of exceptional children: An introduction to special education. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1974.

Kirk, S. A. Educating exceptional children. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972.

Resource Section

This section is intended to provide suggestions for those vocational educators who would like to learn more about the handicapped, and leads for those who are seeking resources to help them in serving the mentally retarded. It includes:

I. Bibliographic Resources
   A. Further study on the mentally retarded
   B. Selected listing of published materials and resources

II. Agencies and Service Groups Providing Services to the Mentally Retarded
   A. State of California
   B. Federal Offices and Agencies
   C. Private and Non-profit Agencies and Organizations

I. Bibliographic Resources

A. Further Study on the Mentally Retarded

Edgerton, Robert The cloak of competence. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

This book deals with the importance of the post-school or post-training period in the career development of retarded persons. In particular, it reveals the occupational problems of persons who have been classified as "mentally retarded" at some time in their life.

Farber, B. Mental retardation: Its social context and social consequences. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

This book deals with mental deficiency in a social context, emphasizing the role of society in perpetuating the dependency and failure of individuals categorized as "retarded."

Gardner, W. I. Behavior Modification in mental retardation. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1971.

Outlines basic concepts used in changing behavior in a positive way to increase skills acquisition and employability.

Kirk, Samuel A. Educating exceptional children. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972.

An excellent basic resource in the field of special education. Provides an integrated and unified approach to understanding various handicapping conditions and their educational implications.

Kolstoe, O. P. Teaching educable mentally retarded children. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970.

A basic text in planning and carrying out an instructional program for mentally retarded students.

Love, Harold D. Educating exceptional children in regular classrooms. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1972.

Examines present policies and practices in serving handicapped students in regular classes. Each handicapped group is treated separately, with particular problems and solutions discussed.

Nelson, Hilding E. Serving students with special needs in vocational education. Gilman Hot Springs, California: Mt. San Jacinto College, 1971. (filmstrips and cassette)

A multiunit series, this presentation consists of audiovisual packages with printed instruction guides and worksheets. Units in the series deal with different handicapping conditions and may be ordered separately. All are excellent sources of information for the vocational educator.

B. Selected Listing of Published Materials and Resources

A bibliography of materials for handicapped and special education. Lambert, R. H. Center for Studies in Vocational and Technical Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1975.

An extensive listing of vocational education resource materials for use in programs serving the handicapped. Can be obtained from: Center for Studies in Vocational and Technical Education, 321 Education Bldg., 1000 Bastom Mall, Madison, Wisconsin, 53706.

Catalog of instructional materials for the handicapped. Clearinghouse Depository for Handicapped Students. California State Department of Education, Sacramento, CA: 1972.

Provides free instructional materials for handicapped students.

Guide to jobs for the mentally retarded. Peterson, R. and Jones, E. M. Pittsburgh: American Institutes for Research, 1964.

Suggests placement strategies and jobs for the mentally retarded in various occupational areas.

How you can help a retarded patient get a job. Hodstein, Hyman. Medical Times, 99, 8, 1971.

Illustrated by numerous case studies, this article points to the importance of proper vocational training and placement for the retarded.

Preparing for Work. Fraenkel, W. A. Washington, D.C.: The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. n.d..

Contains useful tips on job training and placement. Lists vocational areas and specific jobs that have proven feasible for the retarded.

A prevocational and social adjustment program for educable retarded adolescents. Beedy, V. Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin, 1971 (ERR) Ed046 041

This program was developed to improve the prevocational competencies of retarded students in educational, social, and vocational areas. A description of activities, vocational and educational adjustment techniques, and parent participation are included.

Programs for the educable mentally retarded in California public schools. Hanson, F. M., and Shryock, C. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1974.

Provides information on planning, managing, and evaluating programs for the educable mentally retarded. A concise summary of state legal provisions, student characteristics, instructional considerations, and guidelines for evaluation. Annotated bibliography is included.

Vocational preparation of retarded citizens. Brolin, D. C. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1976.

An excellent resource, this book presents a comprehensive "how to" approach to vocational training for the retarded.

Work-study handbook for educable mentally retarded minors enrolled in high school programs in California public schools. Campbell, L. W., Todd, M., O'Rourke, E. V. Sacramento: Division of Special Education, California State Department of Education, 1971.

Manual for planning and implementing secondary level programs of academic preparation and skill training for the educable mentally retarded.

Work-study programs for slow learning children. Cross, J. and Crawford, W. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Department of Education, 1967.

Discusses the development of integrated academic and career education programs for the mentally handicapped.

The Governor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped: Organizational Handbook. The California Governor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped, Sacramento: State of California Employment Development Department, 1974.

An informative publication which details the goals, organization, and functions of this important task force. Includes a directory of local Committees for Employment of the Handicapped.

Directory: Sources for Handicapped Job Applicants. The California Governor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped. Sacramento: State of California Employment Development Department, 1976.

A source book prepared for employers seeking to hire the handicapped. This 80-page publication lists the principal rehabilitation and training agencies within the state. State, regional, and local contacts are listed for the Employment Development Department, Department of Rehabilitation, public and private rehabilitation facilities, Regional Occupational Programs, community colleges, and state colleges and the University of California. The Directory includes a brief description of each type of recruitment source and the services it offers to applicants and employers.

II. Agencies and Service Groups Providing Services to the Mentally Retarded

A. State of California

California State Department of Education

Office of Vocational Education
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814
Samuel Barrett, Director

Office of Special Education
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814
Les Brinegar, Asst. Superintendent and Director

The Clearinghouse Depository for the Handicapped Student
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814

An office which offers assistance in the procurement of specialized instructional materials and equipment for handicapped students. Provides consultant services for programs involving specialized use of media for instructional purposes.

Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA)
50 Fulton Street, Rm. 445
San Francisco, CA 94102
Howard Williams, Regional Manpower Coordinator

The purpose of CETA is to provide job training and employment opportunities for underemployed persons through a flexible and decentralized system of federal, state and local programs.

Office for Handicapped Individuals (in HEW)
50 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
Martha Hislop, Regional Coordinator

Serves as the regional focal point, within the federal Office of Human Development, for program coordination and planning relevant to the physically and mentally handicapped.

California Area Learning Resource Center
600 S. Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 1304
Los Angeles, CA 90005

California area distribution center for specialized learning materials for handicapped students. Operates in cooperation with the National Center for Educational Media and Materials for the Handicapped (NCEMMH).

Below is a list of associate centers affiliated with the California Learning Resource Center, all of which circulate materials for handicapped students.

1. Anaheim City Schools
2. Placer County Office of Education, Auburn
3. Kern County Supt. of Schools, Bakersfield
4. San Juan Unified School District, Carmichael
5. Special Education Development Program, Chico
6. Contra Costa County, Concord
7. Imperial County Supt. of Schools, El Centro
8. Center for Exceptional Children, Eureka
9. Fountain Valley Elementary, Fountain Valley
10. School of Education/CSU-Fresno
11. Devereaux Schools in California, Goleta
12. Stanislaus County Dept. of Education, Modesto
13. Lancaster School District
14. Office of Supt. of Schools, Napa
15. Newport-Mesa Unified School District, Newport
16. Instructional Materials Lab. CSU-Northridge
17. Orange Unified School District
18. Placentia Unified School District
19. Tehama County Dept. of Special Education, Red Bluff
20. Shasta County School Office, Redding
21. Rowland Unified School District, Rowland Heights
22. Sacramento City Unified School District
23. Sacramento County Office
24. Department of Education, Sacramento
25. Scholarship and Special Instructional Programs, Sacramento
26. Office of County Supt. of Schools, San Bernardino
27. Department of Special Education CSU-San Diego
28. Teacher Learning Center, San Francisco
29. Office of Education, San Jose
30. San Luis Obispo County Schools
31. Santa Barbara County Schools
32. Special Education, Santa Barbara
33. Sonoma County Office of Education, Santa Rosa
34. Lassen County School District, Susanville
35. Torrance Unified School District
36. Ventura Unified School District
37. Visalia School District

California State Department of Rehabilitation
830 K Street Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814
Edward V. Roberts, Director

Responsible, at the state level, for state-federal programs of vocational rehabilitation for the disabled. The disabled include persons handicapped by mental or physical illness or impairment. The primary objective of this agency is to prepare disabled persons for gainful employment. Under federal sponsorship, the State Department of Rehabilitation supports research and demonstration projects, training qualified personnel, and facilities construction and improvement.

District Offices

Chico District Office
Service Area: Colusa, Glenn, Butte, Siskiyou Modoc, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, Trinity, Yolo, Yuba, Plumas, Sutter, Sierra, Nevada

Sacramento District
Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado, Alpine

Santa Rosa District
Del Norte, Humbolt, Lake, Mendocino, Napa Solano, Sonoma

Oakland District
Alameda

San Francisco District
San Francisco

Pleasant Hill District
Contra Costa, Marin

San Jose District
Santa Clara

Redwood City District
San Mateo

Stockton District
Amador, Calaveras, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tuolumne

Riverside District
Riverside, Imperial

San Bernadino District
Inyo, San Bernadino

Fresno District
Merced, Mariposa, Madera, Fresno

Bakersfield District
Kern, Kings, Tulare

Salinas District
Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Benito

Santa Barbara District
San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara

Long Beach District
South Los Angeles

San Diego District
San Diego

Downtown Los Angeles District
Los Angeles

East Los Angeles District
East Los Angeles

Van Nuys District
Northwest Los Angeles

Inglewood District
West Los Angeles

Anaheim District
Orange

Los Angeles Mid-Cities District
South Central Los Angeles

Norwalk District
Los Angeles

Covina District
Los Angeles

Pasadena District
Northeast Los Angeles

The Governor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped
State of California
Employment Development Department
800 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, California 95814

At the state level, the Governor's Committee on Employment for the Handicapped forms a link between the President's Committee and local committees within the State of California. The primary goal of the Governor's Committee is to create a climate of equal employment opportunity for handicapped persons. Through local organizations, the committee seeks to develop job information, educate the public concerning job needs and abilities of persons with handicaps, assist agencies concerned with employment of the handicapped, and works toward eliminating architectural barriers which limit the employment opportunities of the physically limited.

Publications are available from the Governor's Committee on affirmative action, hiring the handicapped, disabilities in employment, architectural barriers, employment guides for the handicapped person, demographic and statistical information, and a variety of relevant guides, handbooks, and periodicals. Films are also available.

Listings of these materials can be obtained by writing to California Governor's Committee for the Employment of the Handicapped, 800 Capitol Mall, MIC 37, Sacramento, California, 95814, or by calling (916) 445-0676.

B. Federal Offices and Agencies

Office of Education

A branch of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Office of Education aids state and local educational agencies in the establishment and maintenance of school systems. This office is responsible for Federal financial assistance to local agencies for special studies and programs, and gathers and disseminates information on the condition and progress of education in the United States.

Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education

National Advisory Council on Vocational Education

Division of Vocational and Technical Education

Comprehensive Employment Training Act

Bureau of Education for the Handicapped

National Advisory Committee on the Handicapped

Office of Human Development

Focuses resources within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare on serving groups with special needs: children and youth, the aged, the handicapped, native Americans, and people living in rural areas. This office is responsible for effective policy development and for program management at the federal level.

President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped

Committee for Barrier-Free Design

Office for Handicapped Individuals

Rehabilitation Services Administration

Office of Developmental Disabilities

Architectual and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board

National Center on Educational Media and Materials for the Handicapped
The Ohio State University
220 West 12th Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43210

This agency provides a comprehensive national program of activities to facilitate the use of educational technology in instructional programs for the handicapped. Free services are provided in cooperation with Area Learning Centers, Specialized Offices, and various public and private agencies.

Specialized Office for Other Handicaps
467 Wisconsin Research and Development
Center for Cognitive Learning
1025 West Johnson Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Special Office for Materials Distribution
Indiana University
Audiovisual Center
Bloomington, Indiana 47401

President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped
1111 20th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

Facilitates the development of maximum employment opportunities for the handicapped.

President's Committee on Mental Retardation
Washington, D.C. 20201

Comprised of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Secretary of Labor, the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, and 21 citizens, this group works to promote awareness of the needs of the mentally retarded. Coordinates services of concerned agencies and sponsors workshops and forums. Also serves as advisory body to the President.

U. S. Office of Education
Bureau of Education for the Handicapped
Division of Media Services

1) Captioned Films and Telecommunications Branch (CFT). Provides free loan service of captioned educational films.

2) Learning Resources Branch. Provides a full spectrum of services to deaf students, including development of needed instructional materials and delivery of appropriate support services.

C. Private and Non-Profit Agencies and Organizations

American Association on Mental Deficiency
5201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015

Organization of professional workers, students, and others interested in the study, treatment, and prevention of mental retardation.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

The CEC serves as a primary resource center, providing information, training workshops, and special assistance to those working with handicapped students.

CEC Information Center on Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

The center maintains and distributes materials of interest to those working with the handicapped. These include publications and audiovisual materials for teachers, administrators, and other concerned professionals.
Toll Free Hotline (800) 336-3728

Goodwill Industries of America
9200 Wisconsin Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20014

Concerned with providing evaluation, counseling, training, job placement, and other rehabilitation services for the handicapped.

Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation
719 13th Street, N.W., Suite 510
Washington, D.C. 20005

Promotes research in the prevention of mental retardation and works to develop programs which improve the quality of life for retarded persons.

National Association for Retarded Citizens
2709 Avenue "E" East
Arlington, Texas 76011

A national organization of parents, professional workers, and others interested in the mentally retarded. Promotes counseling, treatment, research, public understanding, and legislation for mentally retarded persons.

National Committee for Multi-handicapped Children
239 14th Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14303

This group provides information on the educational, therapeutic, recreational, and social service needs of children who have more than one handicap.

Assessment Section

The questions in this section are intended as a check of your general understanding of the instructional considerations involved in teaching handicapped students in regular vocational classes.

The problems which follow are not "formula" questions in which a precise and exact answer is possible. Rather they are meant to stimulate your thinking and cause you to reflect on the content of the module as you write or type your responses on separate sheets of paper.

If you intend sending your responses to a cooperating agency for evaluation, be sure that you

1. Indicate the complete name of the module
2. Number all responses (Questions 1a, 1b, etc.)
3. Enclose your name and return address.

Problem 1.

How might you expect the educable retarded student to differ from your regular vocational students after training relative to

a) the extent and type of directions an employer should give him?

b) his awareness of job opportunities and prospects for career development?

c) his marketable skills?

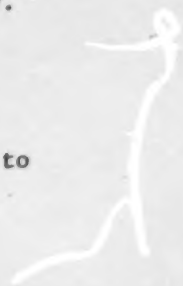
Problem 2.

How might you approach job (task) analysis with the educable retarded student in mind? The job is stock clerk and task is taking inventory. In particular, describe how you would analyze the job to establish

a) the appropriate levels of detail in the sub-tasks.

b) whether transfer of skills (generalization from one situation to another) is involved.

c) what abstractions (i.e., counting, reading) are involved.



Problem 3.

A mentally retarded student in your work experience class in hospitality services asks to try cashiering. You suspect that he will make errors in change but you're not certain. What action would you take? Frame your response in terms of

a) what you would consider in arriving at your decision.
b) what you'd tell the student.
c) what current training adjustments you'd make, if any.

Problem 4.

In trying to place a student in a trial job situation you have employers giving you a variety of "put-off" reactions. Indicate what responses would be appropriate if the employer said

a) "If I pay him minimum wage, I'll never get my money's worth."

b) "The rest of my employees would resent having him to look after."

c) "I don't see how he could do this kind of work."

AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH